

**REMARKS**

Claims 25, 26 and 28-50 were previously pending in the application. By the Amendment, Claims 25 and 31 are currently amended, Claim 50 has been added, and Claims 26, 28-30 and 32-49 remain unchanged. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The claims stand rejected under the cited prior art of record. Specifically, Claims 25, 26, 28, 29, 35, 36, 38-43 and 45-49 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Geyer (WO 2002/50804). Claims 30, 33, 34 and 37 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Geyer. Claims 31 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Geyer in view of Becke et al. (U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2003/0209018). Claims 44 and 48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Geyer in view of Evertzberg (EP 1 151 717).

**Objection to Claim 31**

Claim 31 has been corrected according to the Examiner's suggestion, which is noted with appreciation.

**Rejections under §102(b) over Geyer**

Independent claim 25 defines a household appliance including a front door having an upper edge, and a front cover disposed in front of the front door. At least one optical status display device is mounted on the household appliance such that the one optical status display device is a selected one of hidden in a built-in state of the household appliance and hidden when the front door is closed. At least one light guide transmits a signal light emitted by the optical status display device. The Office Action contends that Geyer discloses these features of the invention. Applicants respectfully disagree with this conclusion.

Geyer discloses an electrically operated household appliance and endeavors to fit the appliance with a trademark such that the trademark has a greater attention-drawing effect. Geyer also describes that the display function can be used to signal whether a power connector is connected to the appliance or for signaling a specific operating state by flashing the light source. In the Office Action, the Examiner contends that the hollow body 10 in

which the components of the display are disposed anticipates the “door” of the invention defined in claim 25. To the contrary, nowhere does Geyer disclose that the appliance even includes a door or a front cover disposed in front of the door. Rather, Geyer merely describes that a “front part” 2 of the appliance includes an integrated porthole window 3. The parts of the display are disposed in a hollow body 10, which directs the light to the light source 9 by a reflecting inner surface to the light-entering areas 8. As described in the present specification, an object of the invention is to transmit light from the optical status display device in the direction of the front side of the front cover, which as noted and defined in claim 25 is disposed in front of the front door. Since the Geyer publication does not reference (1) an appliance with a door or (2) a cover disposed in front of a door or (3) a light guide that serves to transmit light in the direction of the front side of the cover, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is misplaced.

In an effort to clarify this distinction, claim 25 has been amended to recite that the front door is opened and closed to access an appliance interior space. Clearly the hollow body 10 of Geyer is not in any manner opened or closed to access an interior space of the appliance. For this reason also, Applicants submit that the rejection is misplaced.

The remaining rejected claims depend from claim 25, and Applicants submit that these claims are allowable for the same reasons and also because they recite additional patentable subject matter. In addition, claim 29 recites that the front cover has a rear surface facing the front surface of the front door and a front surface in opposition to the rear surface, where the optical status display device is mounted on the front door. With reference to the discussion above, Applicants submit that since Geyer lacks any reference to a front door, it is clear that Geyer additionally lacks the claimed optical status display device that is mounted on the front door. Claim 45 recites that the optical status display device is operable to emit a signal light of a different color indicating a respective different operating state. Although Geyer references that the glass body 5 may be formed of individual bodies and include differently-colored individual illuminations, nowhere does Geyer disclose that the differently colored illuminations are indicative of respective different operating states. Still further, claim 46 recites that the appliance includes a plurality of light guides that transmit signal

light pertaining to different operating states. As noted, nowhere does the Geyer publication reference multiple guides for transmitting signal lights pertaining to different operating states. Claim 47 defines related subject matter.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 30, 33, 34 and 37

Without conceding this rejection, Applicants submit that those of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to modify the Geyer structure to correct those deficiencies noted above with regard to claim 25. As such, Applicants submit that these dependent claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on an allowable independent claim.

Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 31 and 32

The Office Action recognizes that Geyer lacks the claimed handle mounted on the front cover, where the light guide is disposed relative to the handle such that the signal light emitted by the optical status display device is visible in the handle. The Office Action contends, however, that “handles on appliances with light guides to display status information are well-known in the art,” with reference to Becke Figs. 1-4. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that since the Geyer publication does not dispose its display in relation to a front door of the appliance, those of ordinary skill in the art would not have been led to attach a handle in the manner suggested in the Office Action. Indeed, it should be clear to those of ordinary skill in the art that a handle secured to the front part 2 of the illustrated washing machine in Geyer would have no purpose. Additionally, Applicants submit that the Becke patent does not correct the deficiencies noted above with regard to claim 25, and claims 31 and 32 are also allowable for the same reasons. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 44 and 48

Without conceding this rejection, Applicants submit that the Evertzberg publication does not correct the deficiencies noted above with regard to Geyer. As such, Applicants submit that these dependent claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on an allowable independent claim. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

New Claim 50

Claim 50 has been added. In addition to those features discussed above with regard to claim 25, claim 50 additionally recites that the optical status display device is mounted on the front door and that the optical status display device emits different signal lights for respective different appliance statuses. With reference to the discussions above, at least features of the invention are lacking in the references of record.

**CONCLUSION**

In view of the above, entry of the present Amendment and allowance of Claims 25, 26 and 28-50 are respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Howard', is written above the printed name.

James E. Howard

Registration No. 39,715

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BSH Home Appliances Corporation  
100 Bosch Boulevard  
New Bern, NC 28562  
Phone: 252-639-7644  
Fax: 714-845-2807  
james.howard@bshg.com